

have about Government, maybe because they do not study it as much as we do or understand it as much as we do. I want to reduce that cynicism, but I want them to have confidence in their Medicare as well. I think this right to choose gives them that confidence.

The conference report also includes other important policies that I believe make a much stronger, better bill. First, we make wealthier people pay a slightly higher premium. Why should someone who makes \$80,000 a year or more pay exactly the same price for coverage as someone who makes \$30,000 a year? The conference report makes wealthy seniors pay slightly more, and this is a very important and rational step toward stabilizing Medicare's growth.

The conference report also injects new and transparent accountancy rules into Medicare, making the trustees show in a comprehensive way what all of Medicare's assets and liabilities truly are. There are also expedited procedures for committee consideration of legislation that addresses any future Medicare funding crisis without changing the Senate rules.

Finally, and in my view most importantly, the conference agreement authorizes health savings accounts. I have been a long-time supporter of medical savings accounts. Now they are going to be called health savings accounts. Such tax-favored accounts encourage responsible utilization of health care services. They offer low-cost insurance to farmers and other self-employed people. For too long, medical savings accounts have languished under regulatory inflexibility. The provisions in the conference report go to great length to make medical savings accounts a stronger, more accessible option for more Americans, and I think that is very appropriate because it adds to the right to choose.

We are in a unique moment in our history as far as health insurance legislation is concerned. We have a limited opportunity to deliver on our promises to get this done once and for all.

Let me remind everyone, there is \$400 billion sitting in front of America's seniors. If we let partisan disagreement prevent us from snatching it up for them, shame on us because, what do you think the chances are next March of this Senate adopting a budget with \$400 billion set aside for Medicare? I think the chances of that happening are not very good.

Let's not allow the perfect to be the enemy of the good. I urge my colleagues to continue in the bipartisan tradition of the Finance Committee and deliver a balanced bipartisan product that does right by our seniors.

I yield the floor. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. COLLINS. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. DOLE). Without objection, it is so ordered.

VISION 100—CENTURY OF AVIATION REAUTHORIZATION ACT—CONFERENCE REPORT

Ms. COLLINS. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to the conference report to accompany H.R. 2115, the FAA authorization bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Committee of Conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 2115), to amend title 49, United States Code, to reauthorize programs for the Federal Aviation Administration, and for other purposes, having met, have agreed that the House recede from its disagreement to the amendment of the Senate, and agree to the same with an amendment, signed by a majority of the conferees on the part of both Houses.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will proceed to the consideration of the conference report.

(The conference report is printed in the House proceedings of the RECORD of July 25, 2003.)

Ms. COLLINS. Madam President, I ask that the conference report be agreed to, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and any statements relating to the conference report be printed in the RECORD.

Mr. REID. Reserving the right to object, I would like to extend the appreciation of the entire Senate, especially on this side, to those who worked to allow us to be at this point: Senators LAUTENBERG, DORGAN, and ROCKEFELLER, and the ranking member of the committee, Senator HOLLINGS, and the cooperation of Senator LOTT, and others. This is a very important piece of legislation for the State of Nevada but also for the entire country. I underscore the very good work of the individuals I mentioned.

This is not perfect, but it goes a long way to protecting working men and women who make it possible for everyone to fly safely in America today.

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that copies of a letter from Marion C. Blakey, the Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration, be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

DEPT. OF TRANSPORTATION,
FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION,
Washington, DC., November 21, 2003.

Hon. ERNEST HOLLINGS,
Russell Senate Office Building,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR HOLLINGS: I have received your November 13, 2003 letter regarding the issue of contracting out functions performed by Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) employees. Your letter requested clarification on the status of "contracting out" of FAA functions related to flight services and

the certification or maintenance of air traffic control equipment used in the national airspace system. I understand that you are not advocating that the FAA in-source any functions currently performed by contractors or cease work and analysis already underway. As you know, several months ago the FAA initiated a competitive sourcing process with respect to the FAA's Automated Flight Service Stations (AFSS). Under the FAA's current schedule, the final source selection decision with respect to the AFSS competition will occur early in fiscal year 2005.

During this fiscal year we have no plans to initiate additional competitive sourcing studies, nor will we displace FAA employees by entering into binding contracts to convert to private entities any existing FAA position directly related to our air traffic control system.

I look forward to working with the Committee on the important challenges facing the Federal Aviation Administration. The Conference Report contains many provisions which will provide us with important tools to enhance aviation safety, security, and capacity. Thank you for your efforts on this important piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

MARION C. BLAKEY,
Administrator.

DEPT. OF TRANSPORTATION,
FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION,
Washington, DC, November 21, 2003.

Hon. JOHN MCCAIN,
Chairman, Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation, Russell Senate Office Building, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: I have received your November 13, 2003 letter regarding the issue of contracting out functions performed by Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) employees. Your letter requested clarification on the status of "contracting out" of FAA functions related to flight services and the certification or maintenance of air traffic control equipment used in the national airspace system. I understand that you are not advocating that the FAA in-source any functions currently performed by contractors or cease work and analysis already underway. As you know, several months ago the FAA initiated a competitive sourcing process with respect to the FAA's Automated Flight Service Stations (AFSS). Under the FAA's current schedule, the final source selection decision with respect to the AFSS competition will occur early in fiscal year 2005.

During this fiscal year we have no plans to initiate additional competitive sourcing studies, nor will we displace FAA employees by entering into binding contracts to convert to private entities any existing FAA position directly related to our air traffic control system.

I look forward to working with the Committee on the important challenges facing the Federal Aviation Administration. The Conference Report contains many provisions which will provide us with important tools to enhance aviation safety, security, and capacity. Thank you for our efforts on this important piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

MARION C. BLAKEY,
Administrator.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I am pleased that the Senate is about to vote on the Conference Report to H.R. 2115, the FAA reauthorization bill. This legislation is critical to our Nation's air transportation system, providing necessary funding for aviation safety and security for fiscal years 2004 to 2007.

Civil aviation generates more than \$900 billion in GDP every year, and we all know that it has faced very difficult economic times. Since September 11, 2001, Congress has passed a number of bipartisan aviation bills to aid the industry and, more importantly, to assure that the air traveling public could continue to rely on this vital transportation mode. Among the many bills enacted, we established the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) to oversee aviation security; we provided grants and loans to help the airline industry through their difficult economic times; and we extended terrorism insurance to the aviation industry. Without these important measures, the aviation industry would be in far worse condition.

The Conference Report pending before us is as important to the health of our aviation system as any of the other bills I just mentioned. This multi-year FAA authorization legislation is needed by airports, so that airport construction projects don't come to a halt and cause layoffs in the construction sector. It is needed by aviation manufacturers and by the airline industry. Above all, it is needed by our air travelers, who rely on a safe and security air transportation system.

The Conference Report on H.R. 2115 authorizes over \$60 billion in aviation spending over the next four years to improve our Nation's aviation system. It includes: \$14.2 billion for security, safety and capacity projects for the Airport Improvement Program (AIP)—over 50 percent of this funding is likely to be spent on safety projects. In fiscal year 2004 alone, this funding will create approximately 162,000 direct and indirect jobs. However, the AIP funding ONLY becomes available if this Conference Report is signed into law—the passage of the transportation appropriations bill is NOT sufficient to make the funds available; \$13.3 billion to modernize the air traffic control system; \$31 billion to operate the FAA's air traffic control system and to support the FAA's safety programs; \$1.6 billion for aviation research and development; \$2 billion for airport security projects, and, \$500 million for the Essential Air Service program. The majority of this funding will come from the Aviation Trust Fund, which is supported by taxes paid by the users of the system.

Although this Conference Report provides a great boost for the modernization of the aviation system and for increasing capacity and efficiency, there are also numerous provisions in the Conference Report that will improve aviation safety and security.

In support of improving safety, the Conference Report strengthens FAA enforcement against the users of fraudulent aircraft parts; increases penalties that the FAA may impose for safety violations—fines have not been adjusted since 1947, and as such, are sometimes simply treated as the cost of doing business by the entity being

financed; and requires the FAA to update and improve its airline safety oversight program.

In support of improved aviation security, the Conference Report includes \$500 million per year to finance security capital improvements at airports—including the installation of explosive detection systems. After September 11, almost \$500 million per year in AIP funds were diverted to security projects from safety and capacity projects. Although this may have been justifiable immediately after September 11, in the long run, a continuation of such diversion could be detrimental to the aviation system; extends the Secretary of Transportation's authority to provide War Risk insurance to airlines against terrorism; expands the armed pilot program to include cargo pilots; requires the TSA to improve the security at foreign repair stations that conduct work on U.S. aircraft; authorizes compensation to general aviation entities for losses resulting from security mandates; and provides for certification and better security training for flight attendants.

In order to improve air transportation service, especially to smaller and rural communities, the Conference Report contains a number of provisions. The report reauthorizes the Essential Air Service (EAS) at current funding levels; establishes a number of EAS pilot programs to give communities flexibility in how they receive EAS service; makes permanent the Small Community Air Development program; establishes a National Commission on Small Community Air Service to make recommendations on how to improve air service to such communities; and includes a Sense of Congress that airlines should provide the lowest possible fare for all active duty members of the Armed Forces.

Further, for large airports in Western States and smaller airports in the East, it frees up more takeoff and landing slots at Reagan National Airport.

The Conference Report addresses numerous environmental issues. It streamlines environmental review of projects to increase airport capacity and improve aviation safety and security; authorizes grants to airports to permit them to purchase or retrofit low emission vehicles at airports; and authorizes projects that improve air quality and give airports emission credits for undertaking such projects.

I want to recognize all the hard work that Senator LOTT, as Chairman of the Aviation Subcommittee, has put into the bill this year. Last winter, many in the aviation community predicted that Congress would not enact an aviation reauthorization bill this year. Senator LOTT would not even consider such a scenario and kept us on a schedule where the Conference Report was actually completed before the August recess. This was only possible, as always, due to the work and cooperation on this bill from the ranking Democratic members of the Commerce Committee

and its Aviation Subcommittee, Senators HOLLINGS and ROCKEFELLER.

I also wish to thank Senator DORGAN for his work in brokering the compromise that allowed us to move forward with this Conference Report today. And I want to thank the administration, especially Secretary Mineta and FAA Administrator Blakey, in working long and hard with us to get a final compromise on the issue of privatization.

I urge my colleagues to support final passage of the Conference Report and send it to the President.

Mr. HOLLINGS. Mr. President, I rise today to express my support for passage of H.R. 2115, Vision 100—Century of Aviation Reauthorization Act. I am pleased that we have finally reached agreement on this important legislation and can now move forward on enacting this bill into law. This comprehensive reauthorization bill will provide \$60 billion in funding for FAA operations, including some \$14.2 billion for airport grants that will create an estimated 600,000 jobs and support for key aviation projects in communities across the country.

Achieving consensus on the conference report has not been easy, and while I think all of us should be encouraged by the results of these efforts, we should take this opportunity to fully consider and appreciate the critical role that compromise has played in achieving this positive result. Colleagues on both sides of the aisle have expressed their concerns about the process by which the FAA Conference Report was deliberated and produced. FAA reauthorization bills have always been moved out of Congress with little controversy, but after passing a bill on the Senate floor with unanimous support and cooperating on developing the bulk on the FAA Reauthorization bill, Democrats were cut out of the process. This was an unacceptable development that violated the spirit of this body, and ultimately it led to the creation of flawed legislation.

For three months after it was filed, there was a lack of will in Congress to pass the FAA Conference Report in the form that the Republican leadership demanded. As a result, FAA projects went unauthorized after the fiscal year ended, and in an effort to end the stalemate they had created the House Leadership was forced to recommit the legislation on October 28, 2003. At this time, they stripped out the most troubling provision in the bill—language that allowed for the immediate privatization of 69 of FAA's air traffic control (ATC) towers and the entire ATC system in 2007. However, the Senate remained unsatisfied with the bill's lack of protection for the Nation's ATC system after it was recommitted, and we voted against cloture 45-43 on November 17, 2003.

Prior to the vote, I worked with Senators MCCAIN, ROCKEFELLER, and LOTT

to seek commitment from the Bush administration to impose a 1-year moratorium on the contracting out or privatization of any ATC functions so that the Senate Commerce Committee can properly conduct its oversight responsibilities of this matter. The Committee plans to hold hearings on this subject next year, and we will also request detailed analyses from the Government Accounting Office and the Department of Transportation Inspector General (DOT IG) in an effort to determine how to best enhance safety, the steps that should be taken to keep pace with future growth, and the best way for the Federal Government to get there.

Today, we have received the proper commitment from the Bush administration to proceed in this manner. Under the arrangement, the FAA has agreed not to proceed with the privatization or outsourcing of any FAA air traffic separation and control functions in fiscal year 2004. The written agreement includes a prohibition on contracting out the maintenance and certification of the systems and equipment in the air traffic control system in the National Airspace System. In addition, the Administration has committed to maintaining the existing Federal relationship with the Nation's Flight Service Stations, with the understanding that they will be allowed to continue on-going evaluations of how best to revamp the entire program. The DOT IG's office has estimated that consolidation of the FSSs, combined with a new computer system, could provide a better arrangement and save \$500 million over 7 years.

With this understanding in place, I am pleased that we can now move forward with broad support for a multi-year reauthorization of FAA programs. Indeed, H.R. 2115 has many good provisions in it that will go a long way towards improving and enhancing our aviation system as we move into the 21st Century. I would like to add that conservative estimates by the FAA show that the formula funding in this legislation will provide more than \$112 million and at least 5,325 jobs in my home State of South Carolina over the next 4 years. I look forward to passing the bill.

Finally, I want to thank Chairman MCCAIN, Senator LOTT, the Aviation Subcommittee Chairman, and Ranking Member ROCKEFELLER for all of their hard work over the last several days and for the long months that they put in prior to that. We came together with a common purpose—to pass this Conference Report—and with bipartisan cooperation have developed comprehensive legislation that provides the American people the proper level of safety, security and financial support.

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, I am pleased to finally be able to support the adoption of the Federal Aviation Administration conference report.

The process that allowed us to get to this point has been unlike any other

that I have ever experienced in my 19 years in the Senate, but we have secured a commitment from the administration that they will not move forward with contracting out any air traffic control functions, which has prevented the Senate from passing this report. I am pleased that my colleagues have confirmed this commitment.

Over the last year, I have worked closely with Senators MCCAIN, HOLINGS, and LOTT on developing this important legislation. I thank them for all of their efforts on getting this bill done. It has not gone as easy as any of us would have liked, but the debate on privatization is important as it is fundamentally a debate on safety and security. Senator LAUTENBERG should be commended for his unrelenting commitment to making sure the United States has the safest and most secure air traffic control system in the world.

We have secured an agreement on this issue that all parties can accept, but it does not mean that this debate is over. I know my colleagues have committed to holding hearings on this issue, and we will be closely monitoring the administration's actions in this area.

The reauthorization of the FAA is a vitally important piece of legislation. It would be the first genuine economic stimulus bill that the Senate has passed this year.

No question exists that since the tragedy of September 11, aviation in this country has been permanently changed. Over the last 2 years, we have seen a decrease in the demand for air travel, hundreds of thousands of aerospace and aviation employees have lost their jobs and the economic pain has rippled through the economy. We cannot have a sustained economic recovery in this country until we have a healthy and vibrant aviation industry.

This bill provides the foundation for the resurgence of an essential sector of our economy.

I cannot emphasize the importance of a vibrant and strong aviation industry. It is fundamental to our nation's long-term economic growth. It is also vital to the economic future of countless small and local communities that are linked to the rest of the nation and world through aviation.

Just as the aviation industry is a catalyst of growth for the national economy, airports are a catalyst of growth for their local communities. In my State of West Virginia, aviation represents \$3.4 billion of the state's gross domestic product and directly and indirectly employs over 51,000 people.

Aviation also links our Nation's small and rural citizens and communities to the national and world marketplace. My home State of West Virginia has been able to attract firms from Asia and Europe because of reliable access to their West Virginia investments.

Without access to an integrated air transportation network, small communities can not attract the investment

necessary to grow or allow home grown businesses to expand. A modern and adequately funded aviation network is fundamental to making sure that all Americans can participate in the global economy. This bill makes sure the United States will continue to have the best aviation system in the world.

This legislation builds upon our commitment to improving the aviation infrastructure of the nation that started with the landmark Aviation Investment and Reform Act for the 21st Century. I believe that this legislation meets the challenges facing the FAA and the aviation industry in the years ahead.

This \$60 billion bill focuses on improving our Nation's aviation safety and air service development, and aeronautical research. While my distinguished colleagues have provided an excellent overview of the bill, I would like to highlight some areas for the bill that I believe are particularly important.

No higher goal exists than the safety and security of the Nation's airports and airspace. Over the past 24 months, we have worked every day to improve security in our airports and on our airplanes. However, until this bill, we had fallen short on providing funding to make sure our Nation's airports have the resources available to make the required improvements.

Airports estimate that they have \$3 billion in unmet security infrastructure needs. Airports have been forced to tap their expansion and development funds to pay for security. It makes no sense to raid funds for safety improvements for security improvements. The security of our Nation is a Federal responsibility and the Federal Government must pay for it.

One of the most important provisions in this bill is the establishment of a \$500 million fund to assist airports with capital security costs. This new fund is intended to stop the diversion of airport development funds meant for safety and capacity enhancements. We will be able to pay for new security requirements while simultaneously improving safety and expanding capacity.

Even in these difficult budgetary times, we were able to modestly increase the Airport Improvement Program funding, which will provide the economy a real stimulus through direct and indirect job creation. Airport development is economic development as airports are economic development for their local communities. It is estimated that U.S. Airports are responsible for nearly \$507 billion each year in total economic activity nationwide. Investment in airport infrastructure is a real economic stimulus that creates both immediate jobs and long-term economic development.

In order to facilitate airport development, I am pleased that this bill includes much of the text of the legislation that Senator HUTCHINSON and I worked on last Congress to streamline and expedite the airport development

process. This country needs to expand its airport infrastructure. Without a substantial increase in this area, aviation delays would increase resulting in billions of dollars of costs to the economy.

Finally, we have authorized a significant increase in aeronautical and aviation research in order to preserve America's leadership in these industries.

Today, we also meet the challenge of making sure our small and rural communities have access to the nation's air transportation network. I continue to be very concerned that air carriers are abandoning small and rural markets. We cannot let these communities go without adequate and affordable air service—their future depends upon it.

I am enormously pleased that the bill extends and expands the Small Community Air Service Development Program, which I fought for in AIR 21. In West Virginia, Charleston used funding from this program to attract new service to Houston, which has been a huge success. Parkersburg was recently awarded a grant and already working on implementing its initiatives to improve air service to new hubs. This program has proven an innovative and flexible tool for communities to address air service needs.

Many of our most isolated and vulnerable communities whose only service is through the Essential Air Service Program have indicated that they would like to develop innovative and flexible programs similar to those communities who received Small Community Air Service Development grants to improve the quality of their air service.

It is for this reason that I, along with Senator LOTT, developed the Small Community and Rural Air Service Revitalization Act of 2003. The FAA conference report incorporates the basic provisions of this legislation. The FAA Bill reauthorizes the Essential Air Service, EAS, program and creates a series of new innovative pilot programs for EAS communities to participate in to stimulate passenger demand for air service in their communities.

By providing communities the ability to design their own air service proposals, a community has the ability to develop a plan that meets its locally determined needs, improves air service choices, and gives the community a greater stake in the EAS program.

Small and rural communities are the first to bear the brunt of bad economic times and the last to see the benefits of good times. The general economic downturn and the dire straits of the aviation industry have placed exceptional burdens on air service to our most isolated communities. The Federal Government must provide additional resources and tools for small communities to help themselves attract adequate air service. The Federal Government must make sure that our most vulnerable towns and cities are linked to the rest of nation. This legis-

lation authorizes the tools and resources necessary to attract air service, related economic development, and most importantly expand their connections to the national and global economy.

This bill meets the challenges facing our aviation system—increasing security, expanding airport safety and capacity, and making sure our smallest communities have access to the network. We can all be proud of this bill.

Again, I thank Senator MCCAIN, Senator LOTT, and Senator HOLLINGS for all their hard work to improve aviation in this country.

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. I have a question for the subcommittee chairman about section 808 of the conference report concerning international air cargo shipped through Alaska.

Mr. LOTT. I am happy to answer the Senator's question. This provision was adopted in the Senate after being offered by the Senator from Alaska.

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. I thank the Chairman. Is it the Chairman's understanding that section 808 only addresses international cargo and does not address the carriage of cargo which first originates in Alaska?

Mr. LOTT. That is correct. Section 808 will allow carriers to interline cargo in Alaska so long as the cargo has an ultimate origin and/or destination outside of the United States. It does not allow foreign carriers to carry or transfer cargo with an ultimate origin and destination both in the United States.

Mr. STEVENS. I thank my colleagues for explaining that this important provision allows carriers to interline cargo in Alaska, with an ultimate origin and/or destination outside of the United States, but does not allow foreign carriers to carry or transfer cargo with an ultimate origin and destination both in the United States.

Mr. BURNS. Mr. President, I come to the floor today in support of the conference report accompanying H.R. 2115, which reauthorizes the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).

Vision 100—Century of Aviation Reauthorization Act would provide just under \$60 billion over the next 4 years for FAA activities. These are much needed funding improvements because we find ourselves in one of the greatest transition periods as a country, and as proponents of the aviation industry, in the history of our nation. With the slow recovery of the industry and the economy since the attacks of 9/11 it is important we pass this legislation immediately.

As a member of the conference, my colleagues and I addressed several important issues and challenges. One of the most important achievements is the progress made in funding the Airport Improvement Program, which is funded at \$3.4 billion in 2004 and increases \$100 million each year ending at \$3.7 billion in 2007. This is a necessary increase, as we need to constantly improve our Nations' airport

infrastructure especially in rural and underserved areas.

Mr. President, as you know, several provisions in or absent from the bill have bogged down its passage. As a member of the conference, even I do not support all provisions in this bill, but I understand the importance of the bill as a whole and the potential pitfalls our infrastructure will take if not enacted.

I do not intend to discuss the entire report, but there are several critical provisions I would like to briefly address which greatly affect my State of Montana and my constituents.

The first provision is intended to make additional slots available to improve access to the Nation's Capital for cities located beyond the 1,250 mile service perimeter at Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport, DCA. I am particularly concerned that small and midsized communities in the west, especially in Montana and neighboring states, continue to have far fewer service options to reach DCA than communities located in any other area of the country. This is due to the fact that the most important hub airport serving the northern tier and intermountain region, Salt Lake City, is located outside the DCA perimeter.

Network benefits are critical to improving this situation, and it is very important that the Department of Transportation consider and award these limited opportunities to western hubs that connect the largest number of cities to the national transportation network. Salt Lake City is a prime example. That airport serves as a primary transportation hub for the intermountain west. I was very disappointed that Salt Lake City received only a single flight from the prior AIR-21 allocation, while other hubs servicing the southwest region received two, or even three daily flights. Increased service at Salt Lake City should be a priority, because of the many critically underserved communities in the northern tier and intermountain west that will receive significant network benefits from additional flights at that hub.

The second issue is the Essential Air Service Program, EAS. As you know, the EAS program provides subsidies to carriers for providing service between small communities and hub airports and is, no pun intended, essential to my state. This report authorizes approximately \$500 million for EAS, and I am extremely supportive of that level.

Unfortunately, the conference report also contains a provision, which directs the DOT to establish a pilot program for up to 10 EAS communities located within 100 miles of a large hub, and those communities will be required to pay 10 percent match of the EAS subsidy. While this provision does not affect my Montana EAS communities, I am still extremely unsupportive of this provision. If any Montana communities were asked to pay this match, there is no way they could come up with the funds. I want this body to know I will

fight expansion of this pilot program in future authorizations. While we need to work on possible alternatives to EAS, we cannot ask small communities across the Nation to fork out funds they do not have for a service they deserve and need.

Finally, this report contains language based on two amendments I offered on the Senate floor during debate earlier this year. The first asks for a report from the Secretary of Transportation on any actions that should be taken with respect to recommendations made by the National Commission to Ensure Consumer Information and Choice in the Airline Industry. The second amendment authorizes compensation to General aviation businesses for losses incurred after the attacks of 9/11. General aviation is an extremely important piece of this country's aviation backbone and we need to keep their perspective in mind whenever any aviation legislation is addressed whether it deals with security or overall aviation policy.

In summation, we have crafted a fair and necessary piece of legislation that needs immediate passage. I ask my colleagues to support final passage of this critical piece of legislation that will aide all aviation sectors across this Nation.

Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, I have serious concerns about several provisions found in the FAA reauthorization conference report. Before the Senate passed S. 824, the FAA reauthorization bill, we expressly prohibited additional privatization of air traffic controllers. We also eliminated a proposed cost-sharing requirement for local communities that participate in the essential air service program. This requirement would have placed an insurmountable burden on many remote communities struggling to maintain commercial air service. While I understand that Administrator Blakey today has promised our Senate colleagues to forestall privatization until the next fiscal year, I am concerned that the window is nevertheless open for eventual privatization and would not support such a result.

I remain concerned about the provisions in this bill affecting the National Environmental Policy Act, NEPA. As I discussed in my statement of November 17, 2003, the legal obligations of Federal agencies to evaluate aviation projects under Federal environmental laws have not been repealed by the language in this bill, nor should they be. If better coordination is the intent of this legislation, there is ample authority contained in the existing NEPA statute and regulations for coordination among Federal agencies in performing required environmental reviews of these projects. The confusing statutory directions contained in this bill are both unnecessary and counterproductive if the desired result is efficient project completion.

I am disappointed that this conference report contains these provi-

sions, and I will work to ensure that the FAA scrutinizes the potential consequences of privatization of air traffic controllers if that issue arises next year. In addition, as the ranking member of the Environment and Public Works Committee, I will continue to conduct oversight pertaining to the implementation of environmental laws for these and other Federal projects.

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, as the Senate considers the final conference report to the FAA reauthorization bill, I would like to take a moment to thank Chairman MCCAIN and subcommittee Chairman TRENT LOTT, for their assistance regarding a provision that is very important to my home State.

For years, I have been working with the FAA and the Jackson Hole Airport to reduce the noise that is produced by older private jets. As some of my colleagues know, the Jackson Hole Airport is the only commercial airport that is located in a national park. Since 1983, the Jackson Hole Airport has operated under a "land use agreement" with the Secretary of the Interior. This agreement requires the airport to implement technological advances to reduce aircraft noise.

However, the FAA has prevented the airport from instituting a Stage 2 restriction on older "noisy" private jets even though the Air Noise Capacity Act of 1990 includes a provision that allows folks to enforce pre-existing noise control measures. Currently, only a small portion, 2.6 percent, of the airport's operations are conducted by older noisy jet aircraft. However, these old noisy jets have a disproportionately high noise impact on Grand Teton National Park and the National Elk Refuge. Because the FAA has failed to recognize the grandfathered status of the Jackson airport, I offered an amendment to the Senate version of the FAA reauthorization bill.

On June 12 the Senate unanimously agreed to my amendment. I am thankful for Senator MCCAIN's and House Chairman DON YOUNG's understanding regarding the need to protect Grand Teton National Park and the National Elk Refuge from the high levels of noise that older private jets produce. The provision is supported by the Jackson Airport Board, Grand Teton National Park, the Town of Jackson, Teton County, and U.S. Department of the Interior.

Mr. President, the Jackson Hole Airport is a commercial service airport located on Federal land within Grand Teton National Park. It operates under a long-term lease agreement with the Department of the Interior. That agreement contains noise control measures, including cumulative and single event noise limits, and requirements for an airport-adopted noise control plan.

Section 825 of the conference report authorizes a commercial service airport that does not own the airport land and is a party to a long-term lease with

a Federal agency, such as the Department of the Interior, to restrict or prohibit Stage 2 aircraft weighing less than 75,000 pounds, to help meet the noise control plan contained in its lease.

It is my understanding that the conferees did not intend to limit application of section 825 to only those noise control measures that are expressly referred to as "plans," but intended the term to refer to the range of noise control requirements and standards imposed by these Federal lease agreements.

Mr. MCCAIN. The Senator from Wyoming is correct. The conferees intended "plan" to refer to the range of requirements and standards contained in a Federal lease, which together constitute its plan to limit airport-generated noise. Section 523 of the Senate bill, introduced by the Senator from Wyoming, would have given similar authority to the Jackson Hole Airport Board. The conference substitute will permit the Jackson Hole Airport, and others if subject to similar Federal lease requirements, to adopt these measures.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I rise in strong support of the Vision 100-Century of Aviation Reauthorization Act. This bill authorizes critical aviation infrastructure and operations spending for the fiscal years 2004 through 2007. The bill also makes important legislative adjustments for our aviation security program at the Transportation Security Administration.

I represent a State with tens of thousands of aviation workers. I appreciate fully the essential contribution that our Nation's aviation industry makes to our national economic prosperity. As the former chairman and now ranking member of the Transportation Appropriations Subcommittee, I spend a considerable amount of my time seeing to it that the needs of our national aviation enterprise are adequately funded.

As my colleagues are aware, consideration of this FAA authorization bill has been delayed for an extraordinary period of time over the issues surrounding the Bush administration's stated desire to privatize certain aspects of our Nation's air traffic control system.

At one time, this legislation included language that specifically authorized the FAA Administrator to privatize the controller workforce at scores of air traffic control towers, including the air traffic control tower at Boeing Field in Seattle. Senators who are not familiar with the geography of the greater Seattle area may not be aware that Boeing Field sits right between Seattle-Tacoma International Airport and downtown Seattle. It is extraordinarily close to our port, our central business district, our major sporting venues—Safeco Field and the Seahawks Stadium. It is also a major installation for the Boeing Company and a busy general aviation airport.

In the wake of the events of September 11, 2001, I cannot support a proposal to contract out the air traffic control function to the lowest bidder in the heart of this critically important corridor.

Immediately after September 11, this Congress passed legislation to take the air passenger screening function out of the hands of private bidders and place it in the hands of a federalized screening force. For the life of me, I do not understand why the Bush administration wants to take the exact opposite approach when it comes to the highly skilled personnel that actually control the movement of our aircraft.

The administration has also cited an interest in privatizing other aspects of our Nation's national air traffic control enterprise, including the employees at our Nation's flight service stations and the technicians that maintain our Nation's air traffic control equipment.

These privatization ideas have not been adequately explained or adequately justified to the Congress or to the public. It has not been determined that such contracting out activities would actually improve upon the exemplary safety record that we currently enjoy with our air traffic control system. I, along with many of my colleagues, have deep-seated doubts about the safety ramifications, the security ramifications and whether there will be any real financial benefit to the taxpayer as a result of such a privatization scheme. It was for these reasons that I and 42 of my Senate colleagues, both Democrats and Republicans, were required to vote against bringing debate on this bill to a close on November 17, and why I joined 55 of my colleagues in support of a measure to explicitly exclude privatization of our air traffic control towers during the initial debate on the Senate bill. At that time, we did not have what I considered to be adequate assurances from the FAA that they would not be launching into these privatization schemes in the very near future.

I am pleased that we have now overcome this hurdle and the administration has given us assurances that they will not engage in any competition studies or outsourcing activities for air traffic controllers or for maintenance and technician personnel during fiscal year 2004. This will give the Congress some time to review the administration's plans in detail, which I intend to do during next year's appropriations' hearings process. Also, with the written assurance now in hand that no outsourcing activities related to our air traffic control system will take place in 2004, we can, if need be, work on putting sufficient safeguards in the 2005 Transportation Appropriations Act if we feel that the administration is heading in the wrong direction when it comes to protecting safety and security.

It is for these reasons that I am relieved by the administration's new let-

ter on this topic which I understand has already been put into the RECORD. I am glad that we have overcome this hurdle.

This bill will provide investments in critical infrastructure and operations at our Nation's airports. Furthermore, it will allocate needed funding to continue our efforts to improve the security of aviation system.

For these reasons, I support this important conference report today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, the request of the Senator from Maine is so ordered.

The conference report was agreed to. Ms. COLLINS. Madam President, I see the Senator from North Dakota. If the Senator has a very brief comment to make, I yield to him.

Mr. DORGAN. Madam President, I appreciate the courtesy of the Senator from Maine. Let me say with respect to the unanimous consent she just offered to pass the FAA conference report, I would like to say that Senator LAUTENBERG has led the fight in this Chamber to try to prevent the privatization during this coming fiscal year of those who work for the FAA. That fight required us to go through one cloture vote and the majority did not invoke cloture. As a result, the FAA conference report was not passed.

Since that time, I and Senators LAUTENBERG, HOLLINGS, LOTT, ROCKEFELLER and others have engaged in discussions with the administration. I want to point out that the letter just printed in the RECORD by unanimous consent is from Marion Blakey. She says:

During this fiscal year we have no plans to initiate additional competitive sourcing studies, nor will we displace FAA employees by entering into binding contracts to convert to private entities any existing FAA position directly related to our air traffic control system.

I point out that the reason we were able to move this conference report tonight was because the administration has agreed they will not, during this fiscal year, privatize those positions in the FAA. That is a very important position, one that my colleague, Senator LAUTENBERG, from New Jersey, fought very hard for. We have achieved that commitment from the administration.

For that reason, we were able to move that FAA reauthorization. Let me say how pleased I am because it is so important to virtually every region of this country. The investment in the Airport Improvement Program and the other things that provide strength to the FAA system is very important to our country.

Let me thank my colleague from Maine. I wanted to explain the circumstances that have led to this point and especially say I have been pleased to work with Senator LOTT, in many contacts over recent days, to try to accomplish this and again say that my colleague from New Jersey, Senator LAUTENBERG, deserves a pat on the back for forcing this result.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

NATIONAL WOMEN'S HISTORY MUSEUM ACT OF 2003

Ms. COLLINS. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent the Senate now proceed to consideration of Calendar No. 404, S. 1741, a bill to provide a site for the National Women's History Museum in the District of Columbia.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1741) to provide a site for the National Women's History Museum in the District of Columbia.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Ms. COLLINS. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent the bill be read the third time and passed, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and any statements related to the bill be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The bill (S. 1741) was read the third time and passed, as follows:

S. 1741

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "National Women's History Museum Act of 2003".

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds that—

(1) the National Women's History Museum, Inc., is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, educational institution incorporated in the District of Columbia;

(2) the National Women's History Museum was established—

(A) to research and present the historic contributions that women have made to all aspects of human endeavor; and

(B) to explore and present in a fair and balanced way the contributions that women have made to the Nation in their various roles in family and society;

(3) the National Women's History Museum will collect and disseminate information concerning women, including through the establishment of a national reference center for the collection and preservation of documents, publications, and research relating to women;

(4) the National Women's History Museum will foster educational programs relating to the history and contribution to society by women, including promotion of imaginative educational approaches to enhance understanding and appreciation of historic contributions by women;

(5) the National Women's History Museum will publicly display temporary and permanent exhibits that illustrate, interpret, and demonstrate the contributions of women;

(6) the National Women's History Museum requires a museum site near the National Mall to accomplish the objectives and fulfill the ongoing educational mission of the museum;

(7) the 3-story glass enclosed structure known as the "Pavilion Annex" is a retail shopping mall built next to the Old Post Office in 1992 by private developers using no Federal funds on public land in the Federal